CROCHET ACTIVISM:
WHAT CROCHET WAS USED FOR IN THE PAST AND IN THE PRESENT

History of Crochet
Historians aren’t really sure when, where, why and how crochet began.

- Theories as to where crochet originated
  - Some believe that crochet began in Arabia and spread through the Arab trade routes.
  - Others believe that it originated in South America, evidence was found that crochet pieces were used in puberty rites.
  - Dolls that were worked in crochet were found in China as well.

- Earliest examples of crochet we are most likely to recognize as crochet were found in the late 18th century.
- Crochet may have developed from a type of needlework called tambouring.
- Originally crochet was done with the fingers instead of crochet hooks we are familiar with today.
- Older forms of crochet were mainly done with fine thread.

Contemporary Crochet
- People are more familiar with the way contemporary crochet looks.
  - With more contemporary crochet we see the use of thicker yarn to make blankets, warm hats, etc.
  - The thinner yarn and thread are still used to make decorative objects like doilies and lace.

Not Just Women
- It’s not just women that can be credited with crochet or knit pieces.
- There are a few men that have joined the knit and crochet movement.
- Mark Newport is just one man that has created some very interesting knitted pieces.
- His pieces consist of life sized, wearable, knitted superhero costumes.

-“My hand knit acrylic re-creations of these heroes’ costumes combine their heroic, protective, ultra masculine, yet vulnerable personas with the protective gestures of my mother: hand knit acrylic sweaters meant to keep me safe from New England winters.” Mark Newport
- His costumes are displayed hanging limply on hangers, he wants the viewer to imagine themselves in the costume.

Yarn Bombing
- A fairly new movement in the knitting and crochet world.
- Knitting and crochet are used to cover various objects in the outdoors.
- Bombers usually hit cities and more industrial areas.
- There are artists that work with yarn who don’t like to be called “yarn bombers”.
  - What the yarn bombers do isn’t art in their eyes.
- Agata Oleksia is one artist who works with yarn that doesn’t believe yarn bombing is art.
  - “Lots of people have aunts or grandmas who paint, do you want to see that work in the galleries? No. The street is an extension of the gallery. Not everyone’s work deserves to be in the gallery. Not everyone’s work deserves to be in public.” Said by Agata Oleksia

- Yarn bombing isn’t only used to attract people to the arts.
- Knitting and crocheting are used to give a softer image to cold, hard items.
- Cars, bicycles, signposts, and fire hydrants are just a few of the items that are covered.
- The woman who started the movement, Magda Sayeg, has been commissioned to create pieces for several companies.
- Pria and Toyota are just two of the major companies that have commissioned work by Magda Sayeg.

Hyperbolic Crochet
- This type of crochet uses a mathematical algorithm or pattern.
  - This simple pattern is how often you increase stitches in a round or row of crochet.
  - You must keep the pattern in order to create the hyperbolic surface.
  - You can vary the rate of increase to change the shape of the coral as well.
  - Using different weights of yarn will also change the shape of the coral.

- The Institute For Figuring is an organization in California that is using hyperbolic crochet to create models of the disappearing corals of the Great Barrier Reef around Australia.

- Corals found in any coral reef are naturally occurring hyperbolic surfaces.

Works Cited